

# Making something out of nothing

Sven Rosborn 2022

Response to the review in the Swedish journal *"Fornvännen"* 2022 of the book *"The Viking King's Golden Treasure. About the discovery of a unique manuscript, Harald Bluetooth's grave and the location of the fortress Jomsborg."* Malmö 2021.

In *"Fornvännen"* Kurt Villads Jensen and Wojtek Jezierski presented "proof" that the source material of the information in this book are recent forgeries.

The publisher of *"Fornvännen"* is Mats Roslund.

By some astonishing, degrading wording, one of the purposes of the review can easily be interpreted as having been to discredit me as a researcher but also to question the Sielski family and the historical source material they have access to today. I therefore begin here with a short description of myself but also about the existing source materials that the family has, which of course is carefully reported by me in the above-mentioned book.

Ever since the year 1970, when I began my studies at Lund University, I have worked with archeology as a scientific subject. As early as 1972, I had joined Professor Erik Cinthio's research seminar in medieval archeology at the university and I was active in this seminar throughout the 1970s. My mentors during this time were Professor Erik Cinthio but also the Professor of prehistoric archeology Märta Strömberg. In 1974 I became curator at Malmö Museum and in 1978 the museum director of Malmö City Museum. Here I created one of Scandinavia's largest archaeological activities with up to fifty employed archaeologists. For several decades, I also collaborated with the city archivist and historian Lennart Tomner and the historian, doctor of philosophy Einar Bager, both at Malmö City Archives. Our collaboration mainly involved comparing medieval Malmö's extensive written source material based on both an archaeological and a historical background analysis. As recently as 2016, my extensive monograph *"Det medeltida Malmö"* was published, where I combine the city's archaeological results with the medieval source material.

Although my field of research is archaeology, working with medieval, historically written source material is in no way unknown to me, which of course contrasts with what the reviewers so contemptuously wrote: *"his lack of competence to work with medieval original texts."*

In 2014, Tomas Sielski presented me with a gold plate with, among other text, King Harald Gormson's name; a gold plate that has been in the family's possession since 1945. The gold plate comes from the grave in the Polish town of Wiejkowo near Wolin that became known to Tomas Sielski's grandfather and his brother in 1945. In addition to the gold plate, a large amount of material has been preserved describing both the find and the grave itself from which the plate and several other Viking Age objects were recovered. In an extensive number of preserved letters along with postmarked envelopes from the 1950s and 1960s, the find is described in detail. The material also contained a number of medieval original letters and a handwritten chronicle. There is also an extensive and detailed diary which belonged to the priest in Wiejkowo in the 1840s. All this was donated by the priest in Wiejkowo in 1945 to the Sielski family to safeguard the material from the occupying Russians. The medieval letters and chronicle were then taken care of by Tomas Sielski's great grandmother Antonina Chmielinska. She was educated at the University of Vienna in the early 20th century and mastered Latin. After the war, she became director of the historical collections in the Polish castle in Lidzbark.

The material thus contained the Latin chronicle, in a document from the year 1267 from the archive of Count Wiejkow referred to as the *"Gesta Wulinensis ecclesiae pontificum"*, which the priest mentioned in his diary in 1841. Through this information, which Antonina had already received from her daughter, she thus knew smaller parts of this chronicle even before she got the original in her hands. In his diary from the 1840s, the priest has quoted some sections from the manuscript. Now, however, Antonina had access to the entire chronicle.

This includes three parts, the first of which spans the time from the 940s until the 990s. In this first part, it is clearly stated that it was written by the priest Avico who was close to King Harald Bluetooth. Since the text is also about Poland as an early independent kingdom, Antonina felt that the risk was too great to announce the existence of the chronicle in the then Soviet-

ruled Poland. She therefore decided to translate the entire chronicle from Latin into Polish, probably as a safety measure to ensure the knowledge would not be lost. During this translation work, she collaborated with Stanislaw Lorentz, professor, historian and director of the Polish National Museum in Warsaw.<sup>1</sup> At this time in the early 1960s, he stayed several times with her at the castle in Lidzbark.

The fact that Stanislaw took part in the translation work can be seen, for example, in the translation of the chronicle's account of the events surrounding the Battle of Sedini in 972. (For more information about this event see my article in Swedish: "[Slaget vid Cidini 972](#)". In the 1960s, Poland's political leadership decided to build a huge monument to manifest Poland's victory over the Germans at this battle. However, the location of the monument did not correspond to the location mentioned in the chronicle, rather to the present-day location of Stettin (Szczecin). As a comment at the bottom of the notes page in the translation of the "*Gesta Wulinensis*", Antonina Chmielinska has quoted what Professor Stanislaw Lorenz pointed out when the two worked on this section about the Battle of Sedini:

*"The professor [Lorenz] points to significant deviations compared to the generally accepted view of the events of the second half of the 9th century. Here is a comment from yesterday's meeting:*

*Dear Mrs [Antonina], due to the fact that we are now celebrating the 1000th anniversary of the Polish state and that [during the famous battle] of Cedynia, Mieszko and his brother defended Poland against the German "Drang nach Osten", it is not suitable that this material sees the light of day. I strongly advise against it. Furthermore, Cedynia, as you are probably aware, has grown to the rank of a national symbol, and I am also aware that there are advanced plans to erect a monument in memory of 1000 years of struggle to maintain the Polishness in these areas. Should there now be a monument in Cedynia and another in Szczecin? In addition, the chronicle "kills" Mieszko's brother Czcibor. He is known only from one chronicle, and indeed only from one sentence; it is about the German author Tietmar. Suddenly, after analyzing your material, it turns out that we are dealing with someone completely different - some Scandinavian warrior who is just Mieszko's brother in arms. This is historical revisionism that has no place in the People's Republic of Poland. If you do not want this material to be burned, I sincerely advise you to preserve this historical "heresy" for future generations. Sincerely, S.L."*<sup>2</sup>

In 2014, when I first came into contact with this new source material from the Sielski family, I announced that I would do everything I could to investigate whether this could really be true. I then wanted to include the Danish National Archives and the Danish National Museum, but these organisations were neither then nor now interested in taking part in examining the material. We then formed an information group of academically educated people who had worked with the Viking Age for a long time. The gold plate was also examined twice at Lund University, the last time by Professor Leif Johansson at the Department of Geology. The composition and method of manufacture of the gold plate was such that everything pointed to this being an older object. The former director of the Royal Mint Cabinet in Stockholm Lars Olof Lagerqvist also personally examined the plate and judged that it was not a recent forgery. During his active service, he had gained recognition as one of the world's foremost experts on forgeries of coins and medals.

It was based on archaeology, which is my field of research, that I was able to demonstrate that the manuscript "*Gesta Wulinensis*" cannot be a forgery. I have publicly presented this in the article "[Aspects of the discovery of The viking King Harald Bluetooth's grave and a manuscript from the late 900s](#)" which was published in both Swedish and English on academia.edu shortly after the book was published in the summer of 2021. More than 4,000 readers have so far read this article. The reviewers have however not mentioned a word about this evidence of mine. I therefore reproduce the main features of this evidence here.

First, of course, we had to prove that it was really Antonina Chmielinska who made the translation from Latin to Polish in 1963. She died in 1978, so the translation must have been made before then. In her preserved translation, it also appears that the work took place in 1963. In the notebook that was used, she has carefully indicated for each page the current date when she worked on the translation. To make it clear that it is Antonina's handwriting, we early on turned to professor dr hab. Tadeusz Widła who was one of Poland's leaders in forensic research. Based on preserved letters from Antonina, it could then be established that it was she who had

done the translation of the *"Gesta Wulinensis"*. In addition, she had used a pen that did not give an even flow, which was typical for the time before roughly the 1970s. In the notebook there was also an attached trademark tag with the book's product number. When producing things in Soviet-ruled Poland, you received a permit valid for three years, which then had to be renewed. Based on the marking, this notebook was produced in the period starting at February 1962 and three years onwards.

Having been able to determine with certainty the writer and the time of the copy, I was now able to note things which appear in the *"Gesta Wulinensis"* but which were under no circumstances known to either archeological or historical science until after the time when the translation was made. In 1977, my colleague Rikard Holmberg published his doctoral thesis in which the remains of a late Viking-era ring rampart at Borgeby Castle in Scania are mentioned in writing for the first time.<sup>3</sup> However, Antonina Chmielinska already mentions in 1963 that Haralds Bluetooth's brother Toke had a fortress in Borgeby in Scania. The existence of this ring fortress was not yet known in 1963. For five years up until 1995, I was chairman of the Borgeby Foundation together with the recognized skilled Viking expert, archaeologist and museum director of the Cultural History Museum in Lund Anders W Mårtensson. During our time on the foundation board, we carried out an excavation in the fortress. Remains of a silver/goldsmith's workshop from the late 900s were discovered. This indicates a very high status for the fortress and confirms the *"Gesta Wulinensis"* information about a royal seat at the end of the 9th century, something that was also not known before.

*"Gesta Wulinensis"* also tells us about the death of Harald Bluetooth's mother in 957, her Christian burial and how her husband Gorm desecrated her grave and moved the body to a pagan burial mound. According to the chronicle, Gorm died at the beginning of July 964 and it was only then, after he became king, that her Christian son Harald Bluetooth was able to open the burial mound and again give his mother a proper Christian burial. Dendro dating has shown that the northern burial mound in Jelling was erected in the winter of 957/958, but also that the deceased, who, judging by the preserved grave goods must have been a Christian, was removed in the winter of 964-965. These dendro datings correspond exactly with the information in the *"Gesta Wulinensis"*, but information about when Gorm and his wife died was not known at all until the dendro surveys were published in 1987.<sup>4</sup> And yet these exact years are mentioned in the *"Gesta Wulinensis"* in Antonina's translation 24 years earlier. The author is the priest Avico who himself was present at the death of Haralds Bluetooth's parents.

Archaeological excavations at Uppåkra near Lund in Scania have revealed that a pagan temple existed on the site for many centuries. This only became known after Professor Lars Larsson had published the discovery in 2002.<sup>5</sup> But in Antonina Chmielinska's translation of the Latin chronicle, it is already mentioned in 1963 how Harald Bluetooth's brother Toke acted during the Norwegian earl Hakon's attack on Lund in 974: *"Tuca and the rest of the faithful then found refuge at the place of the dead, which had been dedicated to pagan gods for centuries."* Even if Uppåkra is not directly mentioned, it is highly likely that it is this pagan place that is meant in the chronicle.

In 2011, a large silver treasure was found in Silverdale in northern Lancashire, England, buried around 900 AD. In the treasure is a silver coin, minted by the Danish king *"AIRDECONUT D(OMI)N(U)S REX"*. The find caused a sensation because no Danish king with this name was previously known in the written historical material. But in Antonina Chmielinska's translation of the *"Gesta Wulinensis"* half a century earlier, this king is referred to as *"Airde Conut"*:

*"The Danes had also jarls, which were autonomous and never had to pay a tribute, and these were the lords at the dominions of Svidjod and Norregi. The lords of these lands were interminable contenders to the throne of the Danes as they were descendants of the blood of the Olaf the Terrible and Airde Conut (Konut the High). The latter conquered the country called Norfynbrarik using sword and fire, and there he held the kingship perhaps before or during the pontificate of Pope Benedict IV. It is said that the king Konut was a man of great posture and he was a head taller than each and one of his men, and therefore he was called Aidire, which in the language of the natives of Norfynbrarik meant tall."*

From, among other things, these four examples, it is quite clear that Antonina must have had access to a contemporary chronicle in her translation, anything else is completely impos-

sible. Admittedly, there have been reports on the Internet that the forgery was made after 2011, but this is not true. Until the summer of 2019, we only knew about the *"Gesta Wulinensis"* from the fragments quoted in the priest's diary from the 1840s that Antonina Chmielinska mentioned in preserved letters to her daughter. Just three years ago, in 2019, we succeeded in the presence of witnesses to trace the entire transcript in the family's legacy and stored collections in Kozalin, Poland.

Through this evidence of historical phenomena which were demonstrably not known in 1963 but were added to the scientific knowledge much later through archaeological research, I as an archaeological researcher have been able to establish that Antonina must have had a Latin original source from the time in question when she made her translation. The fact that she also had the help of one of Poland's most respected historians and museum officials leaves behind every trace of doubt about the authenticity.

The review in *"Fornvännen"* appears to be very strange due to its many inaccuracies but also due to many stated claims with no basis in fact, which rest solely on the authors' own claims which are presented as truths. With the closing discrediting statements about me in the review in *"Fornvännen"*, there is no doubt about who it is that the reviewers want to try to ridicule. However, this attempt fails as the forgery theory they put forward cannot be tied to me but to those who were behind the creation of this source material, that is, those who made the translation from the original Latin text into Polish. Antonina Chmielinska plays a decisive role here, but so does the highly regarded Polish researcher Professor Stanislaw Lorenz. Were they forgers? Of course not. In order to make it clear that the review is substandard and incorrect on several points, I will include some examples below to illustrate this.

#### **Some examples of the inaccuracies in the review in "Fornvännen".**

**The text of the review is indicated in bold**

***"Several different genres are mixed. Certain parts of the text are reminiscent of contemporary Latin historiography, factual and chronological progression. Other parts are rather reminiscent of an exaggerated caricature of fairy tales. For example when Harald grabs Sven by the neck and throws him into the mud, or when two opponents meet in "the oval, which was shaped like a hen's egg". Completely without parallels in the Latin sources of the time. In addition, a contingent of warriors "who served under the shield of the horned dragon", whatever this was. Such an institution can hardly have existed in the 9th century."***

Presenting the above statements as evidence that the *"Gesta Wulinesis"* is a recent forgery is astonishingly amateurish. The two mentioned events are after all described by eyewitnesses to the events, in the latter example by Avico himself who in the text describes his experience when Harald Bluetooth was later wounded: *"The king was saved by our brother Poppone, who took the glowing coals in his hands and burned the king's wound, a skill which he had learned from the brothers of the monks of Frankorum, who were trained in the medical art and care of wounds caused by sword, arrow, spear, or axe. At that time I was prepared to grant the king absolution, but his soul returned to him and suddenly he came back to life, as if no one had ever harmed him."*

To counter the reviewers' claim that the above-mentioned descriptions in the *"Gesta Wulinensis"* resemble an exaggerated caricature of fairy tales with no parallels in the Latin sources of the time, an example can be referred to the contemporary writer and priest Dudo of Saint-Quentin, born ca. 965 and his large chronicle *"Historia Normannorum"*.

Below is one of many examples in this chronicle that shows basically the same storytelling technique as in *"Gesta Wulinensis"*. The example shows the unreasonableness of the generalizing statement *"Completely without parallels to the sources of the time"*. I have chosen an episode from Dudo when Gorm's brother Harald arrived in Normandy in 945 to help his relative Richard against the French king Louis.<sup>6</sup> Then the two armies met and negotiations began:

*"King Harald also stood there with the people of Coutances and Bayeux and next to King Louis stood the Franks. But there were also the chosen youth of the Dacians who carried their lances and had shields in their hands. They were only looking for a way to kill the Franks and the king. ... With a roar of rage rising to heaven, all the Dacians brandished their weapons, now that the opportunity was there and in blind fury at the murder of their lord they rushed upon Count*



*Herluin and slew him without blinking. ... Surrounded on all sides by the countless the enemy hordes from Coutances and Bayeux as well as from the pagans, they were cruelly cut down and fanned to death like sheep by wolves.*" Dudo's chronicle contains several similar stories. Apparently priests could indeed write in this manner at the same time that Avico wrote his *"Gesta Wulinensis"*.

The reviewers also question the story of the Jomsvikings: *"In addition, a contingent of warriors "who served under the shield of the horned dragon, whatever this was. Such an institution can hardly have existed in the 9th century."* These are personal guesses that the reviewers are trying to present as truth and this really does not belong in a serious review. Contemptuously denying the Jomsvikings by calling them a non-existent institution is an astonishing statement that ignores the work presented by a variety of researchers on the subject during the 20th century.

The first time it is mentioned in the *"Gesta Wulinensis"* that the Jomsvikings carried *"the horned dragon"* as a coat of arms is when Styrbjörn, son of the king of the Swedes, joins the Jomsvikings: *"There were also many other distinguished warriors together with the young Cetibiurn (Styrbjörn), friends of Tukka, brother of King Harald, who served in the troops under the red banner with the sign of the horned dragon."* The second time this coat of arms is mentioned is when Wulf accidentally wounds Harald Bluetooth: *"Wulf was a noble warrior of the team in the fortress of Jumnburchu (Jomsborg), who from his youth served under the shield of the horned dragon."*<sup>7</sup>

It should be obvious that a warrior society like the Jomsvikings had a unifying symbol, a coat of arms. For example when the sons of Lodbrok ravaged England, they carried in their coat of arms *"Leodboga"*, i.e. the image of a raven. According to the *"Anglo-Saxon Chronicle"*, the English conquered this mark in 878:

*"In the winter of the same year, the brother of Ivar and Halfdan landed in Devonshire, Wessex, with 23 ships, and he was killed there along with 800 other people and 40 of his soldiers. The war banner "gufana" which they called "Raven" was also taken."*

***"On pp. 227-228, mention is made of "mercenaries who were called Gopleani [najemnicy zwani Gopleani]". The name refers to a Slavic tribe, Gopleani/Goplani, but it is mentioned in only one (1) source, "Descriptio civitatum et regionum ad septentrionalem plagam Danubii" or the so-called "The Bavarian Geographer". This source was written sometime in the 8th century, probably in the monastery of Reichenau, and in it the tribe is said to have had 400 fortresses. Scholars have tried to connect this strain to Lake Gopło in present-day Poland (halfway between Warsaw and Poznań), but the source itself was only discovered in the 18th century and was not known in the Middle Ages. The text contains several, mostly distorted and unidentifiable, tribal names. Nor have they found any archaeological traces of any tribe or settlement at the city of Gopło or of these 400 fortresses. According to the so far most accepted hypothesis, formulated by G. Labuda, it is the distorted name Polani who lived at Gniezno. But even this interpretation is very uncertain. This shows that the Gesta Wulinensis must have been written after the 18th century."***

This is another strange "proof" by the reviewers that the *"Gesta Wulinensis"* is a forgery made after the 18th century. The fact that the manuscript *"Bavarian geographer"* was first found in the 18th century obviously says nothing about when it was written. It would be as crazy as saying, for example, that the so-called *"King Valdemars jordebog"* would be a forgery from the late 17th century because it is not known earlier. This manuscript was found in the 1690s in a shop in Copenhagen and is an important document for understanding the organization of Denmark in the 13th century.<sup>8</sup> However, with the same view of historical source material that the reviewers use, this Danish source would also have to be dismissed as false because it is not recognized in earlier sources and because its content was previously almost completely unknown.

In the manuscript text that *"Geographus Bavarus"* is said to have written in the middle of the 8th century, the many Slavic tribes are mentioned, including the *"Glopeani"*. Early researchers wanted to connect this tribe to the area in central Poland which in the years 1143 and 1193 is referred to as the place name *"Gopla"*. Against this, G. Labuda has presented his disputed hypothesis that it would be a corruption of a name. However, a hypothesis does not have to be correct because it is not fact.

An excerpt of some of the Slavic tribes mentioned in the manuscript is: *"Osterabtrezi, in qua civitates plus quam C sunt. Miloxi, in qua civitates LXVII. Phesnuzi habent civitates LXX. Thadesi plus quam CC urbes habent. Glopeani, in qua civitates CCCC aut eo amplius. Zuireani habent civitates CCCXXV. Busani habent civitates CCXXXI. Sittici, regio inmensa populis et urbibus munitis-imis. Stadici, in qua civitates DXVI populusque infinitus. Sebbirozi habent civitates XC."*<sup>9</sup>

I have not studied Latin but ask the open question if so many "civitates" can, as the reviewers claim, be castles. In total, then, according to the document from the probably 8th century, the specified Slavic area would have had no less than 4,623 castles. This is unreasonable. The word "civitates" should instead refer to a term from the past that is closer to the modern word "society". It is of course self-evident that through archaeological science, no such settlements belonging to a particular tribe could have been found. As an archaeologist, I can certainly confirm a possible settlement found during an archaeological excavation, but I can hardly tell who specifically lived there.

***"On p. 354 the idiom 'just as a scythe sometimes hits a stone' [tak jak kosa czasem trafia na kamień] is used. It is impossible that this Polish idiom would be mentioned in the Latin original. It was not until the 13th century that the scythe was introduced as an agricultural tool in Poland - and the idiom itself was added after the Middle Ages. It is possible that it is the translator's licentia poetica, but it does not seem very likely. Incidentally, Polish idioms are used in several places in the book that have no Latin equivalents at all."***

This is a completely false statement by the reviewers. It is well known to those who know the facts of the subject that the scythe existed in Northern Europe as early as the Iron Age. The comprehensive lexicon *"Kulturhistoriskt lexikon för nordisk medeltid"* in 21 volumes from the 1960s, written by the most experienced Nordic researchers of the time, says the following under the word "Scythe": *"The oldest scythe, the short scythe, had a short blade and handle. ... In its most original form, the short scythe was a one-handed tool. However, finds from eastern "Götaland" in Sweden of blanks for 60-70 cm long blades show a presence of scythes with full length blades already during the Roman Iron Age and migration period. There are also examples of longer blades from Denmark."*

Ironically enough, in the same magazine *"Fornvännen"* where the review in question was published and where this information is given that the scythe did not exist until the 13th century, there is an article in 1982 that clarifies the facts. Janken Myrdal from the Nordic Museum in Stockholm then presented in his article *"Agricultural implements of iron before the year 1000"* facts that scythes have existed in the Nordics during the Iron Age. Since Avico, the author of the *"Gesta Wulinensis"*, for many years served at Harald Bluetooth's court in Denmark, it may be appropriate to quote the following from Myrdal's article here:

*"From the Roman Iron Age in Denmark, Steensberg reports about ten finds of scythe blades that are completely or almost completely preserved. They are all 21-37 cm long, most of the blades are also quite wide. From the Danish Viking Age, Steensberg reports some scythe blades, one of them completely preserved and 46.5 cm long. Recently, at a Viking-era settlement in western Jutland, a completely preserved blade has been found, which is 50 cm long."*<sup>10</sup> The whole thing becomes absurd when the reviewers, after wrongly asserting that the scythe did not exist until the 13th century, claim that *"the idiom itself was added after the Middle Ages"*, that is, regarding the text *"just as a scythe sometimes hits a stone"*. How do they know this? The answer is simple: they don't know. The reviewers then use the words *"licentia poetica"* which is just another example of the attempts to ridicule me or those who translated the *"Gesta Wulinensis"*, i.e. Antonina Chmielinska with the help of the respected Polish historian and professor Stanislaw Lorentz. The review is full of such condescending text, which of course has no place in a respected publication like *"Fornvännen"*.

***"On p. 332 it is described how Tukka in 953 "did not intend to get rights over Jews and merchants" on the island of Jumlin (i.e. Wolin). However, in Wolin, or in Pomerania in general, there were no Jews, or any Jewish community, either in the 9th century or in the 12th century, when the text would have been edited."***

The reviewers know nothing about this; these are only personal guesses presented as truths. Namely, the historical sources at this time for this geographical area are almost completely non-existent. It may be noted, however, that one of the oldest descriptions of Poland extant

today was written by a Jewish traveler, Ibrahim ibn Yaqub of Spain. He undertook his journey during the period 961-966. Ibrahim describes, among other things, Pomerania but also areas further south where Jews were:

*"Was das Land des Buislaw anlangt, so erstreckt es sich in seiner Länge von der Stadt Prag bis zur Stadt Krakau ... Die Stadt Prag ist aus Steinen und Kalk erbaut, und sie ist der groste Handelsplatz jener Lander. Zu ihr kommen aus der Stadt Krakau die Rus und die Slawen mit Waaren, und es kommen zu ihnen aus den Landern der Turken Muhammedaner, Juden und Turken gleichfalls mit Waaren und gangbaren Munzen und fuhren von ihnen Sklaven, Zinn und verschiedene Felle aus."*<sup>11</sup>

***"On pp. 332-333 a Polish text is reproduced in facsimile: i oboz warowny na połwyspie przy jeziorze Jomno lub Jumno zezwolił jego druzynom obsadzić. In the Polish transcription and in the Swedish translation this has been translated as "and allowed his team to build the fortified camp on the Jumno peninsula". The information that the peninsula was located on Lake Jumno/Jomno has been omitted as if this was considered difficult. But in section 19 (p. 347), where the name is spelled correctly as Jamno, it is clear that it must refer to Lake Jamno, located east of the town of Kołobrzeg on the Polish coast. This lagoon-like coastal lake was formed, by land elevation, first in the 14th century. It took until the 17th century before it was completely surrounded by land, and thus no longer formed a bay in the Baltic Sea. The Gesta Wulinensis must therefore have been written after the 17th century."***

The reviewers claim: *"But in episode 19 (p. 347), where the name is spelled correctly as Jamno..."*. So what is *"spelled correctly"*? This becomes completely incomprehensible because I report in the book that the place is mentioned in the *"Gesta Wulinensis"* with partially different spelling. The fact that the reviewers believe that *"Jamno"* is the right one is only because they want to connect this to the name of a modern place which, however, is far from the place next to Wiejkowo where Harald Bluetooth's grave was found. The priest in Wiejkowo, who was related to the local count and had access to his medieval archives, tells in his diary from the 1840s the following according to Antonina Chmielinska who had access to the priest's diary:

*"What captivated the interest of our priest was however the part of the chronicle describing a mighty warrior building a fortress more than 300 years before the von Flemming ancestors arrived in the region. The fortress was built by the lakes Marthentiner and Paatziger See but at the time they were a bay called Jumno in Slavic."*

The texts in her letter could be clarified when we found Antonina's entire translation of *"Gesta Wulinensis"* among the family's possessions in Poland in the summer of 2019. Here it says, among other things:

*"In the year of our Lord 953 King Konut entered into a covenant with Lubomir, ruler of Vilini, and aided him in crushing the rebellion which had risen against the brothers from Jorvik who carried the word of the Lord amongst heathens. Lubomir generously rewarded his benefactor and allowed his band to build the fortified camp on the Jumny peninsula. Tukka who led the armies of Konut, chose a site for the camp in the ruins of a burnt rebel fortress, which in the Slavic language was called Jumlin."*

In the same translation it is mentioned:

*"King Harald, who was old and long afflicted by fever due to wounds in his body and heart, left this world for Christ. This transpired during the twenty-fifth year of his rule and one year and seven months after he arrived at the fortress by the sea Jamno."*

Where then should this place be sought? The presence of Harald Bluetooth's grave in Wiejkowo shows that the fortress Jomsborg where he died must have been nearby. In the *"Gesta Wulinensis"* texts above, it also appears that it was near Wolin. In Antonina Chmielinska's summary of the priest's diary entries about the *"Gesta Wulinensis"*, before she had access to the entire chronicle and only the priest's diary entries, it is stated:

*"He (Tukki Normandie) and his entourage were not well received by the ruler of Wolin and they then decided to build a harbour for their ships on the very site where the village Tessin is today, our priest writes. They built a mighty fortress that aside from the palisade was also protected by wetlands. From the fortress they launched their raids, terrorizing the entire region. They took their revenge on the people of Wolin as they took control over all merchant ships and caravans from the merchants of Byzantium. It was not long until Wolin submitted to the newly arrived and had to pay tribute."*

With this mentioned neighbourhood to Wolin, the reviewers' claim: *"it is clear that it must be Lake Jamno, located east of the city of Kołobrzeg on the Polish coast"* collapses like a house of cards. The current Lake Jamno is not close to Kołobrzeg, but almost 40 kilometers east of it and therefore as much as 110 kilometers east of Wolin. It then becomes of course completely incomprehensible how the castle at Lake Jamno/Jumno could function as protection because according to the *"Gesta Wulinensis"* the Jomsvikings entered into an alliance with the city of Wolin and *"with the city of 'Solin' which lies in the east by the sea to protect the road between these two earlier fighting cities."* As soli in Polish means salt, it is likely that this is the town of *"salsa Cholbergiensis"*. The lake with the castle must therefore lie between these two cities. Without considering these facts, however, the reviewers proceed from their own personal assumptions that it is the present-day Lake Jamno and based on this they then claim: *"The Gesta wulinensis must therefore have been written after the 17th century"*.

It can be noted that Aleksandra Petrulevich in an academic essay from Uppsala University has analyzed the early name forms for *"Jumne"*.<sup>12</sup> The place *"Jumne"* is mentioned on the gold plate that was placed in Harald Bluetooth's grave in Wiejkowo. She writes that the names: *"Jómi"* and *"Jumne"* most likely go back to the word *"joma"*, that is, *"pit or ditch"* and denoted *"the Great Bay"*, part of the Szczecin Bay. Aleksandra also notes that there are many variants of the word in Poland, for example Jama (1), Jamka (1), Jamna (1), Jamno (6) and Jamy (2). From these six existing records of various places with the name *"Jamno"* without access to any source material other than the word, the reviewers conclude that it would be a lake far from the events mentioned in the chronicle. From these personal guesses, it is also concluded that this confirms that the chronicle *"Gesta Wulinensis"* is a forgery from after the 17th century. This definitely has nothing to do with serious research.

***"Several times dates specified by month and day are used, e.g. October 17. This way of reporting dates was completely unknown in the Middle Ages when dates were given according to saints' days or according to the classical division of months into kalendae, nonae and idus."***

With the help of Professor Stanislaw Lorentz, Antonina Chmielinska has translated an original Latin text into comprehensible modern Polish. Then it is obvious that the Latin dating method was not used in the Polish text, which would have been incomprehensible to all except the few who mastered this technique for older dating. However, the reviewers invoke this in an attempt to make the *"Gesta Wulinensis"* appear as a forgery, which is of course completely misleading. This means, for example, that any other Latin chronicles that have been translated into more modern languages with these modern dating corrections would be forgeries. There are so many that it would be pointless to list only a few examples that demonstrate this approach.

It may also be noted that in the same notebook as the translation, there is on the last pages a translation table inscribed by Antonina herself, indicating the calculation methods for transferring Latin dates to modern dates. This clearly shows that the translators made use of this table when the date corrections to modern chronology were made.

## Notes:

1. Biographical information about Stanislaw Lorentz:  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stanis%C5%82aw\\_Lorentz](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stanis%C5%82aw_Lorentz)
2. Sven Rosborn: *Slaget år 972 vid Cidini. Nya uppgifter från handskriftstexten till "Gesta Wulinensis ecclesiae Pontificum"*. 2022.
3. Rikard Holmberg: *Öresundskustens medeltid*. Lund 1977.
4. Kjeld Christensen & Knud J. Krogh: *Jellinghöjene dateret*. Nationalmuseets Arbejdsmark 1987.
5. Lars Larsson: *Lars Larsson: Resultat från 2001 och 2002 års utgrävningar i Uppåkra*. Ale 2002:3.
6. Dudo: *Normandiets Historie under de förste Hertuger*. Odense Universitetsförlag 1979.
7. Sven Rosborn: *listed works* 2022.
8. Ingvar Andersson: *Skånes historia. Senmedeltiden* Sid 20-21. Stockholm 1974.
9. Maddalena Betti: *La Descriptio civitatum et regionum ad septentrionalem plagam Danubii*. Lo spazio oltre il « limes » nel IX secolo.  
<https://journals.openedition.org/mefrm/1078?gathStatIcon=true&lang=en#ftn1>
10. *Kulturhistoriskt lexikon för nordisk medeltid*. Band 10. Malmö 1965. Sid. 539-542.
11. Georg Jacob: *Erste Heft ARABISCHE BERICHTE von Gesandten an germanische Fürstenhöfe aus dem 9. und 10. Jahrhundert*. Berlin 1927. Sid 12.
12. Aleksandra Petrulevich: *At Jómi och Jómsborg: slaviska namn i fornnordiska källor? En etymologisk undersökning*. Uppsala universitet. Institutionen för nordiska språk 2009.